

BETTERS SHOULD BACK CHAMPION UNTIL DEFEATED

IS the constant cry from the betting faction in the pugilistic game that the favorite is frequently overthrown justified by the facts?

The recent defeat of Abe Attell, the former featherweight champion of the world, by Johnny Kilbane, when Attell was held a 2 to 1 and 10 to 4 favorite, has brought up a revival of the question. Ask any man who attends fights the opinion and he will likely tell you that the percentage of favorites losing is greater than that of the so-called long shots. Unquestionably he is sincere in his belief, but he forgets many of the fights in which the favorite has won.

As a matter of fact, in boxing, as in any other game to which betting is attached, the general public hears of the winners and not of the losses of any heavy gambler. If a strong favorite is overthrown where the odds may be 10 to 3, as is frequently the case, there is a hurrah in the papers of the money that has been wagered and won or lost. The average man thinks of what he might have won, and that leaves an impression on his mind.

Now, it is possible with the ordinary run of fights the favorite may be frequently defeated, but where champions are concerned and the title is in the balance you will find that in most part the champion has given good account of himself.

Let's go over the history of some of the champions and their various matches and you can tell for yourself. When Corbett boxed John L. Sullivan in New Orleans Sullivan, then the champion, was rated at 10 to 3, and even held as good as 4 to 1. Champion Corbett when he boxed Charlie Mitchell and knocked him out was 10 to 3 over the Englishman. A little later, at the time James J. was beaten by Robert Fitzsimmons, the Californian was quoted at 10 to 6, and once more the short ender came home.

Fitzsimmons, who succeeded Corbett as the world's titleholder, was picked to win from Jeffries when James of Southern California was sent into the ring and the few men who fancied Jeffries profited in consequence, as the price was 2 to 1.

Jeffries on assuming the title became the favorite, as is the custom with a champion, and good prices were quoted in many matches in which he was the winner. After beating Fitz Jeff was rated at 2 to 1 over Sharkey and 2 to 1 over Corbett. When Ruhlman was sent against him the Akron giant was on the short end of 10 to 4 betting. In his second fight with Fitzsimmons Jeffries was a 10 to 4 favorite, and the same price prevailed in the second match with Corbett. Munroe was no little thought of that he was at 4 to 1, with little of the "one" end in sight.

Jeff Favorite Once Too Often. After being acclaimed champion Jeffries was a betting favorite up to the time of his meeting with Jack Johnson. But, then, you must remember Johnson was the legitimate champion and as such was 10 to 6 over the white man.

Joe Gans when he fought Frank Erne for the lightweight title, then held by the latter, was quoted at even money. But, then, you must remember Johnson was the legitimate champion and as such was 10 to 6 over the white man. After that in most of his fights the Baltimore lightweight was a prohibitive favorite. The nearest to an even price was when 10 to 6 was laid that he would beat Battling Nelson in the Goldfield. Probably the reason for such a liberal price was the conditions that Billy Nolan as manager of Nelson imposed—conditions that many fight fans did not believe the colored boy could successfully meet. Later, when Joe boxed Nelson in Colma, where he lost his title, 10 to 3 money that the Hegewich lad would lose went begging at the ringside.

As an illustration of an outside price, Terry McGovern was 6 to 1 to beat Young Corbett in their Hartford match, which was won by Corbett in a round.

Nelson, who followed in the footsteps of Gans, was a favorite up to and after his Wolgast match. The latter figured 10 to 4 over Dick Hyland and was quoted at 2 to 1 over Maynard, who possessed him of the lightweight title. Wolgast has also been a good stanch favorite. Having whipped Nelson, he was quoted at 10 to 4 against La Grava and 10 to 3 against George Memele. On the same 10 to 4 price was in existence for Frankie Burns and 10 to 6 for Owen Moran.

Stanley Ketchel was another example that proved the rule rather than the exception. After he had knocked out Joe Thomas at Colma, Cal., the better rallied to his standard. They sent in the coin at 2 to 1 for the next bout with Thomas, 10 to 4 against Mike ("Twin") Sullivan and 10 to 6 against Brother Jack. In the last Thomas bout Joe was a short ender, 10 to 4, and Papke was 10 to 4 short end in Los Angeles when he stopped Ketchel. Later in the return match in San Francisco Papke was a 10 to 7 favorite, but failed to make good, and on their last bout at Colma Ketchel was favorite, 10 to 4.

What does it prove? Nothing, perhaps, but if one big better's advice is to be followed it shows that it's good policy to follow a champion.

"Advice is hard to give for betting on fights," said a man who has made that a business. "I follow but one rule. It is to back the champion until he is beaten. Ordinarily you will find that after a boxer wins the title he is good for several fights and in many instances for quite a number of them. Bet on him then and stay with him. Of course he must lose sooner or later, but in the long run if you want to bet on fights you will have profited by this system."

Why Connie Mack Favors Collegians

Maybe the reason Connie Mack is partial to collegians is because twice they have won the world's title for him. Columbia is responsible for Eddie Collins, Jack Coombs was unearthed at Colby, Bender played with Carlisle, Plank won Gettysburg's color, Barry was a Holy Cross man, and Santa Clara, Cal., was Krause's alma mater.

Players Should Be Taught How to Slide to Bases



Photos by American Press Association.

By TOMMY CLARK.

WHY is it that so little attention is given to base sliding and base running during the spring training season? But few big league managers drill their men in this side of the game. A little practice each year and serious attention paid to it would mean an abundance of stolen bases, and more stolen bases would mean more runs, more games won and better baseball.

One trouble with the training camp today is that not enough attention is paid to sliding. The players have it on the training program, and they fix up the sand pile and do little stunts with as little effort as possible and move around and scatter as soon as they can. They do that each training season. Players look on that part of the work with malice and hatred. It would place them to have all reference to sliding eliminated.

But sliding should be just as important as hunting practice. At least half an hour each day should be devoted to sliding practice.

Nearly any one can slide feet or head foremost, but how many can throw themselves to the right or left, can twist themselves or catch themselves in a manner to evade the infielder clutching the ball? You would be surprised to discover the scarcity of them by watching their work in just one of these practices.

Now, sliding in baseball—that is, the real art of sliding—is just about as "deep" a thing as trapeze work in a circus. There is a whole lot to the

heart or lack of ambition, for it requires much nerve and vast energy to become acquainted with the "inside dope" on sliding.

Cobb and Bush have both served as examples for young and those not so young. Little has ever come of it.

Bush became expert in evasive sliding by continued practice and the spending of energy and effort. So did Cobb. When Bush started out he was an awkward base runner and inexperienced in sliding. He was further more of the sort the average man points to and remarks that "he'll never learn." Bush learned. "Twas a tough job, but Bush made that grade. Johnny McGraw is another manager who believes in having youngsters practice base sliding. During the spring training McGraw had his men out nearly every afternoon teaching them the different slides.

He did the same thing last spring. The result was that the Giants were the best base running team in the National league last season. And, accidentally, it may be said, had much to do with the Giants in capturing the pennant in 1911. McGraw has six of the leading base runners in his league on his club. Pittsburgh is another good base running club, but the majority of teams have given little time to this branch of the game.

1.—A perfect hook slide. 2.—Arthur Shafer of the New York Giants practicing in the sliding pit. 3.—A bad slide—started too far away from the bag. 4.—Use of the leg in blocking a base runner. 5.—A poor method—base runner comes into the bag sitting up.

AMERICA'S BEST SWIMMERS FOR THE OLYMPIAD

ATHLETIC interest centers these days in the fast approaching Olympic games of 1912, and with the great meet less than three months away it is gratifying to note that besides a most likely vic-

balanced team of watermen, capable of holding their own in every event on the program, and both local and foreign experts are conceding that is a sterling aggregation has an excellent chance to score more points than any other team at the meet.

From such a galaxy of stars as J. H. Rolly, Bud Goodwin and Nicholas Neich of the New York A. C., Richard Friel, City A. C., Eben and Frank Cross of Princeton, J. Stoddard, Philadelphia S. C., and Perry McGilivray and Harry Heber, Illinois A. C., a foursome should be picked that will average around 2 minutes 30 seconds for 100 yards (the distance each man will have to swim is 218.6 yards), and on past performances no other team can show such speed. It may be mentioned incidentally that McGilivray is credited with having recently covered the furlong in 2 minutes 25 seconds in an eighty foot pool, which makes him a close rival to Daniels.

The latter will not start in the 100 meter race, but McGilivray, Friel and Heber, who traveled a century within six inches of him last March, all three finishing under fifty-seven seconds, should be able to land this title, and there is every prospect that Duke Kahanamoku, the Honolulu native, whose 100 yards straightaway record of 55 and 2-5 seconds has been accepted by the officials of the Amateur Athletic Club union, will also strengthen Uncle Sam's sprinting forces. A purse has been raised in Hawaii to send him to Sweden, and of course he will be entered from the United States. Americans who have seen Kahanamoku swim express the belief that he is as fast a short distance swimmer as ever lived.

For the 400 and 1500 meter swims the feeling is general that we have no men likely to figure in the awards, which is rather a pessimistic attitude to take when it is considered that both Rolly and Goodwin did one mile last summer in 25 minutes 40 seconds in spite of a cross tide that carried them in a circle and certainly added a half minute to their time. Looking over the foreign open water performances of 1911, the conviction is gained that a very slight improvement will give this pair a fighting chance—if not first, at least second or third, and every point counts.

Heber is ahead. In back stroke swimming honors seem to be at the mercy of Harry Heber, whose 100 yard race is nearly four seconds faster than that of the best

Europeans. Barring accidents, he should score an easy victory. There are other good candidates in Goessling, Goshnell and Barnes, though it is a question whether the funds will be sufficient to send more than one man for this event.

Michael McDermott will be our reliance in the breast stroke 200 meter

so far been shown to take his measure. Whether he can maintain his speed over the longer (400 meters) course is uncertain.

It is not believed that the authorities will find it possible to add more than two fancy divers to the team, but as George Gaidick and Arthur McAleenan are adepts both in diving from the ten meter tower and from the three meter springboard we will have two entries in each event if this pair is chosen, as seems probable. They will have strong opposition from Sweden and Germany, and the style obtaining in the Olympic contests may militate against them. They, however, are doing remarkable work, and on merit they should land on top of the heap.

As will be seen, the prospects are for the United States will make a strong bid for the first six of the nine events on the program, and there is a chance to score a second or third in the other three. Considering, then, that the Australians are not expected to send a full team to Stockholm, and that England and Germany, the only other formidable countries, will have weak spots in their squads, the confidence appears warranted that this country will have a particularly good chance to lift the point trophy.

Many Races Play Baseball

"BASEBALL, the great 'American game'—how often one sees the national pastime in the public prints. But, friends, there isn't such a thing," says Harry Nelly, who travels with the St. Louis Cardinals. "The Polack, the Hun, the Greek and the Italian have horned their way into the sport, and they're doing it. The 'Castilian gentlemen' are pitching the Cuban, a flock of Indians and a Japanese."

"I remember one game we played against Chicago," says Joe Kutina, who can make base hits and two cows grow where there was only a bale of hay. "Talk about the national sport. I was at bat, Billy Evans was umpiring behind the plate, Block was catching, Benz was pitching. Collins played second base, and Ping Bodle was in center field."

"Drawing a line straight through the diamond, here's the dope you get: Evans, Welsh; Block, Polack; myself; Austrian; Benz, German; Collins, Irish; Bodle, Italian—six nationalities straight in a line. Can you beat it?"

Way to Judge a Pitcher Is to Watch Him Pitch

"THE only way to tell anything about a pitcher is to see him pitch," said Jim McGuire, the Cleveland scout, in response to a question as to what he thought of some of the youngsters of the Detroit Tiger squad at Monroe, La., recently.

"These boys have all the actions of pitchers so far as any one can see from the practice stunts, but until they have been under fire I decline to pass final judgment on them."

"To my mind the ideal athlete is the one who is best when the necessity for being strong is greatest. It's that old fighting spirit that counts. There are lots of fellows who are wonders in practice, no matter what line of sport they may be engaged in. But parlor boxers seldom are fighters, and many fine warm-up pitchers fall down terribly when they come to face the music in a regular game."

"Many a time I have warmed up men who had everything that I ever have seen a pitcher display. Speed, curves, control and everything else would be theirs, and I would feel confident that they would be able to win that day if

we got them a couple of runs. Then these fellows would go out to the center of the diamond and show me about half of what they had displayed in warming up practice."

"It isn't always a lack of gameness that accounts for a pitcher's failure to do as well in a game as in practice. Some of the men are so anxious to win that they work themselves into a stew. There are plenty of fellows who are game, yet can't do their best when they want to. It seems to be a sort of a baseball instinct that enables the great pitcher to rise to the emergency. He has that fighting spirit, and at the same time keeps his head cool."

"The youngsters of the Detroit squad might pitch great ball when handing them up to the batters in practice with nothing depending on the outcome of the 'chugger's' effort, and yet fall down against even a mediocre club in a regular game. I have seen it repeatedly happen that a twirler would make the batsmen of a strong American league club look bad when he was pitching to them in practice and then let some class D or college nine hammer him all over the place."

RUCKER AS BACK LOT ARTIST

"THE 'Life of an Unbeatable Slabman With a Tall End Club' will be the title of Nap Rucker's first and last story—that is, if he ever writes one—of major league baseball. The star southpaw has worked for five seasons with the Brooklyn National league club, and always this team has finished in the second division, the Georgian winding up each year with a winning percentage higher than that of his club."

Nap Rucker, as all in these parts well know, hails from Alpharetta, Ga. Born and raised on the farm, he was a typical backwoodsman when he first came to Atlanta to try out with the Cracker Baseball club. This was way back in 1904, when Abner Powell was manager. Having been at the game only on back lots, he knew but little.

When he first worked with the Cracker outfit Rucker did not think he had anything on his hands and was content enough to stop the game when turned adrift by Atlanta. He took his walking papers good naturedly and

went back to the farm, where he remained for the remainder of the season. It was the following summer before the baseball fever again got the best of him, and he then and there signed with Augusta, Ga., which club occupied a place in the South Atlantic league. This time he made good.

During a few months of 1904 Rucker was with Augusta, and the following season worked out the entire schedule, pitching such remarkable ball that he was drafted by Brooklyn, and there he has shown ever since.

Rucker is a southpaw that has "everything." He does not rely on a slow ball, fast one, the curve or his noddle, but mixes them all, and this carries him the limit usually with success. He does not use the splitter. He does not think it is any too good for a twirler's arm.

It is practically the unanimous opinion of all baseball experts that Rucker is the best southpaw in the National league and a runner-up for first in all baseballdom.

PITCHER LIVELY'S DEAR ADVENTURE WITH A CHAIR

JACK LIVELY has gone from the Detroit Tigers, but the traditions of his story will linger long. In his year of service with the tiger band, Jack probably furnished as much fun and was the butt of as many amusing stories as any one who ever wore Detroit livery. Here is a new one on the south-erner, told by that well known story teller, Harry Tutbill:

"One day while the club was stopping in Philadelphia," says Harry, "Lively happened to break a little piece off one of the chairs in his room. The damage was slight and probably could have been repaired for 10 cents. Instead of reporting the breakage to the office and having the chair fixed, however, Lively got scared and made up his mind to destroy all evidences of the accident."

"Accordingly he smashed the chair into thirty-two small pieces by jumping on it and breaking the fragments over his knees. This done, he hid the traces of his crime in a small closet under the washstand, hoping that the mangled body of the chair would not be found until the Tigers left town."

"It so happened that the hotel was doing some general housecleaning at that time, and Jack's foul deed was discovered the next morning by the chambermaid, who reported to the housekeeper. The result was that Lively found himself confronted with a bill for \$18 for one chair, and the club secretary had to pay it, not forgetting to deduct the amount from Lively's next check."

"That little adventure cost Mr. Lively just \$17.50 more than it ought to have cost, to say nothing of the trouble and time he spent in reducing the chair to fragments."

Six Millions In Harness Purses To Be Distributed During the Present Year

CONSERVATIVE estimates place the aggregate amount of money to be distributed among trotting and pacing horse owners this year at more than \$6,000,000. This covers stakes and open purses. There will be more than a thousand meetings, covering territory from Maine to California, and from Florida to the Canadian line.

Readville, Hartford, Lexington and other points where the trotter and pacer are in favor have already claimed dates and stated the amount of purses. These three meetings alone will give owners about \$120,000. Then there are Detroit, Buffalo, Syracuse, Poughkeepsie, Kalamazoo, North Randall, Columbus and one or two other prospective grand circuit stables.

Hardly less important is the great winter harness circuit, which includes Springfield, Peoria, Pekin and Aurora, Ill.; Dubuque, Des Moines and Davenport, Iowa; Indianapolis, Terre Haute, Fort Wayne and Evansville, Ind., and other cities and towns in the middle west.

Next perhaps in importance is the Lake Erie circuit, which takes in Oil City, Wilkesbarre, Hanover, Allentown and Lancaster.

Then comes the Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland circuit. This circuit is made up of half mile tracks, and last year some of the fastest two lap ring performances known to the harness horse world were brought off there.

These are but a handful of the whole lot of trotting organizations that will be in operation. There are about 300 fair associations in the country, and fast harness horse exhibitions are the drawing features.